

The Times

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THURSDAY, MAY 1, 1902.

THE BURDEN OF THE DISPATCH.

Newspaper controversies that have left the domain of public questions and descended to the plane of personal bickerings and vituperations are not of interest to the reading public. We feel thus, and we feel, therefore, the objections to carrying on a discussion that for a week, so far as one party to it is concerned, has not progressed beyond the stage of imputing to The Times motives that did not exist, in order to support a line of editorial policy that was inherently untenable.

To what unreasonable lengths this method of argument will protract the original issue we are as yet unable to see.

Commenting on an editorial in the Dispatch, which urged that the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad be forced to abandon its Belvidere-Street tracks and use therefor the Seaboard Air Line track along Bacon Quarter Branch, we said:

"The Dispatch, in spite of its alleged proprietary connection with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad interests, is no doubt perfectly sincere in its proposition."

The Dispatch retorted: "Who alleges it? Do you? If so, come out and have the truth proved upon you?"

To this we replied that the public alleged and believed that the proprietors of the Dispatch—Messrs. John L. Williams & Sons—were also large proprietors of the Seaboard Air Line Railroad. This allegation of joint interest was amply sustained by the Dispatch in its leading editorial of Sunday, when it stated that Messrs. John L. Williams & Sons were, as the public alleges, proprietarily connected both with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad and the Dispatch. Instead, therefore, of proving an untruth on The Times, as it had so valiantly and incautiously offered to do, the Dispatch found itself convicted, out of its own mouth, of the very charge it had declared so vehemently to be false.

We wish our readers to observe that we did not say that the Seaboard Air Line owned or controlled the Dispatch, which is the charge that the Dispatch first puts in our mouth, and then in unmeasured terms upbraids us for making. We did say that a connecting link of financial interests existed between the Dispatch and the Seaboard Air Line Railroad, and that connection is furnished by the interest which Messrs. John L. Williams & Son have in both institutions.

This is the charge which has so infuriated the Dispatch, and this is the charge which it admits to be true. As we said on Saturday last, we saw nothing discreditable in owning stock both in railroads and newspapers, so long as the two were kept scrupulously distinct. It does not, however, appear to be so simple an affair to the mind of the Dispatch.

The original question of removal of the Richmond, Fredericksburg and Potomac Railroad track on Belvidere Street has been utterly ignored and the Dispatch has made the sole issue of the discussion its "proprietary connection with the Seaboard Air Line Railroad interests." So be it! We will discuss that point of the Dispatch's own choosing.

Is it a blow in the dark to say that Messrs. John L. Williams & Sons own the Dispatch? Is it a malicious desire to injure a harmless contemporary? Is it opposed to the best traditions of journalism in Virginia, as the Dispatch says bitterly and with anger in its leading editorial yesterday?

Certainly the statement that the owners of the Dispatch, whether Messrs. John L. Williams & Sons or Messrs. Elyson & Cowardin, had a proprietary connection with railroad as well as journalistic interests in Virginia would have caused no violent outburst of anger from the Dispatch three years ago. And why? Why not then or now? Why would such a statement be proper then which when made to-day is characterized by the Dispatch as "actuated by spite and malice and the desire to inflict injury?"

For the very reason that the best and heretofore only traditions of Virginia journalism are not dead. Because three years ago no newspaper had ever been bought and run by the promoters of large corporations, who "acquired the Richmond News for the purpose of moulding public opinion in favor of the Seaboard and furthering their other interests." (Testimony of Mr. L. M. Williams.) Because the public have a voice and conscience and character, which are all shown forth in that sacred and public institution—the newspaper. Because the editor of a newspaper is both the leader and the servant of the public and to use his position as the directing power of a public journal for the conscious advancement of private ends has been abhorred by all men sailing under fair colors since papers first were published. Because, despite the Dispatch's neglect to answer the categorical question, whether the present owners of the Dispatch are not the same persons as those who bought the News, the fact is that the present owners of the Dispatch are the same persons who bought the News and ran it for two and one-half years as a means of furthering their corporate interests in this city. Because this fact, once only furtively hinted at, is now openly acknowledged. Because this use of the public press for private ends has shocked and disturbed the mind of the people, who now feel that their feet are set in slippery places and fear that where they once looked each to his own paper for guidance and direction, they may find only the self-seeking counsel of the owners of their

Journal.

This is the state of affairs that has given to our simple statement the vindictive malice that the Dispatch sees fit to read into it.

If the Dispatch is hurt by these facts it should uphold those who brought them about. We will let a patient and comprehensive public determine who is doing the wincing and writhing, who it is that is trying to struggle from under the ban of public condemnation. As long as the Dispatch continues its present association and brings up the question of its ownership and control, we will state the facts as they may develop, and we think there is much yet to learn.

THE OWNERS OF THE NEWS.

In the fight made by the Seaboard Air Line for a charter from Richmond to Washington, the Richmond News, then a newly organized paper, was pressed into service to "mould public opinion in favor of the Seaboard." This venture and the liberal use of retained lobbyists were successful, and the News plumed itself not as the successful drudge of openly acknowledged corporate interests, but as the public's champion in the fight against a grasping monopoly. This same monopoly, we may remark, exists to-day, and the Seaboard shares in the profits. The News also found other fields for its public spirited efforts. What these fields were and what motives animated the News are set forth in its leading editorial of yesterday, which we reproduce to-day.

So far as our knowledge goes, this confession is absolutely unique in Virginia journalism. We have never before seen a newspaper openly acknowledge that it was purchased by commercial interests for the promotion of commercial ends, or that it was bought by corporate interests to advance the welfare of its purchasers. But here is a frank, open avowal that the Richmond News was purchased by Messrs. John L. Williams and Sons for the purpose of promoting the interests of the Richmond Traction Company and the Virginia Electrical Railway and Development Company, the property largely of Messrs. John L. Williams and Sons. We must say that the News was a faithful champion of these interests and that it made a vigorous fight against the Passenger and Power Company and against what it chose to term the Fisher interests. Mr. Fisher, the alleged owner of the electric lines run in opposition to the Williams lines, was held up to the people of this community as the incarnation of all that was selfish and greedy. Yet the Traction Company's lines have been turned over to a trust company in which Mr. Fisher and his associates are directors, to operate them as they see fit, and through this sale or combination or whatever it may be called, Mr. Fisher is, so far as we can see, in as complete control as ever of the street railway lines of this entire community.

The fight of the News does not seem to have accomplished the destruction of the Fisher interests, however well it may have preserved those of Messrs. John L. Williams and Sons. The News tells us that its present owners purchased it because The Times, the Leader and the Dispatch would not fight for the enterprises controlled by the Williams interests. Since then the Williams syndicate has also purchased the Dispatch.

A GROUND-SWELL.

There is no process in this country more interesting than the growth and development of what we call public sentiment. There are many men of many minds in the United States, but Americans entertain some general opinions in common. Sometimes the people seem indifferent to public matters and permit public affairs to go along without interference on their part. Again they become thoroughly aroused on this question or that, and when they do they are the mightiest force in the land. Whenever they assert themselves they have their way.

It may also be remarked that when the people begin to assert themselves, when public sentiment begins to crystallize, one feels it in the very air. Whenever there is a "ground-swell," as we call it, there is little difficulty in recognizing it.

For some time past we have felt that public sentiment in Virginia was in favor of having the new Constitution proclaimed, and now we are certain of it. In vain is the cry set up that a few persons here and there are holding meetings which do not represent the sentiment of the public. When county after county resolve in favor of proclaiming the Constitution it is idle to shut one's eyes to the fact. There is no longer a doubt in the minds of any intelligent men that the white people of Virginia generally are in favor of putting the new Constitution into effect by the simple act of proclamation.

We have interested ourselves to discover the underlying reason for this. It may be a sufficient reason that the people have satisfied themselves that they have a Constitution which is a low-sht ahead of the so-called Underwood Constitution, and that being satisfied on that point they do not care to vote on it. The new Constitution gives us an excellent court system; simplifies our form of government; takes out of the Legislature a great mass of private bills which had no place there; puts the corporations of the State under the control of a corporation commission; simplifies the system of taxation, enhances the revenues of the State and reduces the rate of taxation. In addition to all this there is a clause which will eliminate what we call the ignorant and vicious negro vote and remove that disturbing element from our politics.

In view of these facts it is not surprising that the people like the new Constitution, and if they like it there is no reason why it should not be put into effect by the same representative body which created it.

But we believe that there is another reason. We believe that the people are afraid that if the Constitution is submitted an effort will be made from one or two sources to defeat it. To be perfectly plain about it, they fear the election machinery of the State and they fear the corporations.

We do not mean to make that charge against either the election machinery or the corporations. In point of fact we

do not believe that either would dare attempt to stifle the voice of the people and defeat the Constitution against their wishes. But we do believe that the people fear these powerful influences and that they are not disposed to take chances with them. They like the new Constitution and they want to make sure that it will become the organic law of the land. The simple process is to instruct the delegates in the Convention to proclaim, and it is perfectly apparent from the action that has been taken here and there throughout the State, and from the expressions of individuals in private and in public, that that is the course which the people desire the Convention to pursue. We have no doubt that when the Convention reassembles next month the delegates will be so sure of their position that few of them will be found in opposition.

We tip our hat to Gunner Morgan, of the United States navy, who attained prominence following the Spanish war by reason of Admiral Sampson's famous endorsement upon his application for promotion. Gunner Morgan has been examined for promotion to the grade of chief gunner, and will get there. Last week the examining board recommended that he be advanced because of moral disqualification. The new examining board, however, did not find that any unfitness existed and recommended the advancement. Secretary Long approved the recommendation.

Acquitted of murder after a trial lasting five days, John Harris fell on his knees in a New York court when the jury came in night before last and poured out his soul in thankfulness to God. This is a new departure. Most of them thank the jury.

A Harrisburg special says that on account of the high price of meat a serious problem in dollars and cents confronts members of the committee of German Baptists who have been appointed to purchase beef to feed the many thousands of brethren who will gather at Paxtang Park at the annual convention, which will last for twenty days during May. That is a most remarkable statement from a Southern point of view. Who ever heard of feeding preachers with beef? Down here the standing dish is fried chicken.

There is one sensible judge in the State of Delaware. He presides over the City Court of Wilmington. Recently he fined a citizen five dollars for keeping a pack of fox hounds which annoyed the neighbors by howling at night. The offender was named John Quincy Adams, but that did not save him from justice.

WHAT WAS IT REALLY BOUGHT FOR?

"It is true that

John L. Williams & Sons own a large interest in the Richmond News, as they own in many other properties. The implication that they control its editorial policy is not true. They have NO NEED FOR AN ORGAN. They are business men and this newspaper is a business enterprise. They do not suggest the course it shall take in any matter. Their purpose, as we understand, is to build up the Richmond News as they have built everything else they have owned, in their own names, and with the avowed purpose of using it to rouse public sentiment in the State of Virginia against themselves."

Editorial in the News July 26, 1901.

"The Richmond News was NOT maintained to represent or DEFEND the interests of the Traction and Development Company."—Editorial in the News April 26, 1902.

Placing a Blush.

As to the "News," there is a plain unblushing statement by its "publisher," the Dispatch, that it was bought openly and without any reserve or concealment two years ago by business people who had important interests here, and who wanted access to the public and the opportunity to extend their properties against what they regarded as injustice and improper exactions. The editorial in the Dispatch April 27, 1902.

"The Richmond News WAS BOUGHT, name and good-will, stock and fixtures, by these citizens openly, in their own names, and with the avowed purpose of using it to rouse public sentiment in the State of Virginia against themselves."

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There never was the slightest attempt at concealment of the circumstances of the purchase of the Richmond News or of the purposes for which it was purchased and for which it was conducted. There is occasion for blushing and for shame in the circumstances attending these transactions, and we will try to show where it is.

Certain citizens of this city had invested a million and a half dollars or more in certain public and utilities here. These were not philanthropic enterprises, but their owners believed that they were for the common advantage of themselves and of the people of Richmond. These enterprises were the Richmond Traction Company and the Virginia Electric Railway and Development Company, both of vast importance and value to the city. They were confronted with hostility and oppression from part of the city administration; they were discriminated against and threatened with practical destruction. Their owners had to choose between two courses of action. They received broad hints that they could buy favor and compete with their rivals in the work of debauching the city legislature to secure what they believed to be their rights and the rights of the public. That was one way. The other way was to make an open and distinct issue; to appeal to the public and rely on the strength of their own claims, as presented to the public. Of the three older newspapers then in Richmond, not one would

IN THE HOME

nothing so enhances the pleasure of dining as

Great Western Champagne

the purest product of the grape. In bouquet and flavor it admits no peer, even among the high priced foreign made wines. Received the

Only Gold Medal

awarded an American Champagne at the Paris Exposition of 1900.

PLEASANT VALLEY WINE CO., Sole Flakers, Rheims, N. Y.

Sold by all respectable wine dealers.

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SOCIAL AND PERSONAL.

"Morgan Springs," the home of Mrs. F. L. Wheat, in Clarke county, was the scene last night of a brilliant wedding of interest to many people of this city. Miss May Wheat was the pretty bride and Mr. Dorsey Read Potter, of Baltimore, the groom.

The old Virginia mansion was a bower of wild flowers and spring blossoms, which were banded on maidens and were twisted around their winding staircase. Palms made a fitting background, and an altar was formed of smilax and carnations interwoven and lighted by wax tapers. The bride party was led by Misses Rosalie Valentine and Rosalie Wheat and Masters Frederick Valentine and Knight Potter, forming a ribbon aisle as they descended the broad staircase. They were greeted in white organdies with wide sashes and bouquets of pink sweet peas. The bridesmaids, in white, were followed: Miss Marion Potter, sister of the groom, and Miss Larina Wallace, of this city; Mr. Charles K. Winkler, Jr., of this city, and Mr. Sidney Manning, of Baltimore; Miss Florence Lyle Wheat and Miss Emily Read Potter, sisters of the bride and groom; Mr. William Travers Lewis, of Berryville, and Mr. Stuart Kearney, of Baltimore; Miss Nellie Little, of Norfolk, and Miss Taylor, of Richmond; Mr. Robert deau Wheat and Mr. A. Reed Johnson, of Baltimore. These maidens were dressed in white tulle mousseline de sole, with trimmings of white Paris ribbons and showers of maidenhair ferns. The groomsmen wore tuxedos and were of the service.

The bride, who entered leaning on the arm of her brother, Mr. Leo P. Wheat, Jr., of New York, wore a dress of embroidered chiffon over white liberty bells and pointed lace trimmings, with pearl ornaments. The wedding veil was caught with a spray of orange blossoms and she carried a shower of lilies of the valley.

Immediately preceding the bride was her maid of honor, Miss Margaretta Holmes McCormick, in an exquisite creation of apple-green liberty satin, carrying in her arms American Beauties. Mr. John W. Davis, of Clarksburg, as best man, carried the bride's train, and the groom, at the altar, wore the service was impressively read by Rev. Edward Hall, rector of Grace Church, Berryville.

Immediately after the ceremony the bride and groom proceeded to the dining-room, which was decorated in pink and green, brought out by fruit blossoms, carnations and shaded lamps, and an elegant buffet supper was served to the guests, who, besides those from the immediate neighborhood, included: Mr. and Mrs. W. T. Potter, parents of the groom, and Miss Julia Potter, his sister; Mr. and Mrs. Francis J. Taylor, Mrs. Robert Chamberlain and Mr. E. K. Legg, of Baltimore; Mrs. F. T. Valen, of New York; Mr. C. C. Sticker, of Richmond; Mr. Wayne Childrey, of Norfolk; Dr. and Mrs. William P. McGuire, Miss McGuire, Mr. and Mrs. R. T. Barton, Miss Conrad and Miss Ward, of Winchester.

The bride, who is a brunette with a radiant air, is well known in this city, where she has often visited her many relations, long a member of the old Allen family. Mr. Potter, though formerly of Baltimore, is now of Clarksburg, Va., where they will make their future home.

A "symphony" will be given on May 31st at the old All-Saints' Church under the auspices of the Young Ladies' Society, for the benefit of a reading-room in the Second-Street Market, which will be opened by the Brotherhood of St. Andrew's in the fall.

This symphony will consist of piano, violin and seven small instruments, and the orchestra will include Mr. G. McSweney, Mr. Linwood Grubbs and W. G. Duckhardt.

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ters. Mrs. Vinson was before her marriage Miss Addie Chaffin.

Mrs. Joseph B. Willard, who has been spending a few days in New York, returned yesterday.

Mrs. Benjamin Palmer had a few friends to play cards very informally Tuesday night.

Mrs. Jacob Battle, of Rocky Mount, N. C., is the guest of Mrs. Benjamin Nash, on West Franklin Street.

Mrs. J. H. Williams has returned from a visit of two weeks at Old Point and Newport News, where she was the guest of Mrs. Burr Powell Noland.

Mr. and Mrs. C. L. Todd, of this city, are in Baltimore for a few days.

Mr. Edward Smithers sailed yesterday on the North German Lloyd steamer from Baltimore for Bremen.

Judge L. L. Lewis and Mrs. Lewis are in Washington attending the Congress of the Sons of the American Revolution.

Mr. and Mrs. Beverly R. Selden, who have been in Goochland, have returned to the city.

Mrs. Mortimer Brooks, the mother-in-law of Mrs. Reginald Brooks, is in the Warm Springs, and entertained at a dinner Tuesday night.

Mrs. Henry Alexander White, of Lexington, Va., is visiting her parents, Judge and Mrs. B. R. Wellford, No. 400 West Grace Street.

Miss Lily Pigman will arrive in the city to-day, and will be the guest of Mrs. W. S. Copeland. Miss Isabel Pigman will not accompany her sister, to the regret of her many friends here.

Masters Calvin and Lindsay Satterfield have returned to Richmond after a pleasant visit to their aunt, Mrs. Sallie Morris, of Albemarle county.

Miss Sophie Stuart, of Washington, D. C., is the guest of Miss Susie Harrison.

Mr. R. L. Campbell is in Danville for a short visit.

Mrs. Taylor Vincent, of West Virginia, most pleasantly remembered by her friends in Richmond as Miss Mary Chaffin, is visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. R. B. Chaffin, in their home at River View.

Mr. Lucian Ryland has returned from a visit to Pittsburg.

Mrs. John H. May, of Waverly, is the guest of her sister, Mrs. J. H. Walthall.

Miss Nannie Lay has returned from an extended visit to New York.

Mrs. W. J. Johnson is spending several days in Washington.

Mrs. B. G. Maury is the guest of her son, Mr. Greenhow Maury, in Danville, Va.

Mrs. Charles Wingo will entertain the Kate Wheelock Whist Club this afternoon.

Mrs. C. W. P. Brock will entertain the "Stay-at-Home" Whist Club to-night.

Mrs. William F. Tompkins will entertain the Afternoon Euchre Club to-day.

The Acorn Club has issued invitations for a dance to be given in Belvidere Hall, Wednesday, May 14th, at 8:30 o'clock. The committee will include Mr. G. McSweney, Mr. Linwood Grubbs and W. G. Duckhardt.

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